



■ Participants and guests at the conference

It's time for tough action against Iran

IT is time for tough action against Iran after it ignored repeated peace overtures, a top Arab official said yesterday.

"Tehran continues to export revolutionary ideas of the 1970s, raising tension in the region," Arab League Speaker Ahmed Al Jarwan told the Press after the opening of a human rights conference at the Gulf International Convention and Exhibition Centre, Gulf Hotel.

The one-day, second conference, Human Rights in GCC Countries – Human Rights System ... National, Regional and International Challenges, was organised by the International Gulf Organisation for Human Rights, Arab Federation for Human Rights (AFHR) and Together for Human Rights.

Mr Al Jarwan said conflicting Iranian statements have only made the situation more complex than lead to the resolution of any issues.

"We are not against a truce with Iran; we don't need a war," he said.

"We are good neighbours

By MOHAMMED AL A'ALI

who want to live in peace, security and prosperity. The GCC has been wise and tolerant of various Iranian antics over the years.

"The Iranian people who live amongst us are happy. It is the Iranian regime or leadership that is making things difficult with interferences especially in Bahrain and its continued support to terrorists."

He said it was sad that Shi'ite mosques were bombed last year in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, because people in the Arab world were brothers regardless of race, sect or religion.

"Iran has failed in playing the sectarian card that Shi'ites were being subject to injustice. They are wrong because we have nothing dividing us as we live and have been living in harmony as neighbours," said Mr Al Jarwan.

"The Iranian people have to stand up against their government's actions and join us to develop the region rather than destroy it. Enough is enough," he said.



■ Mr Al Jarwan

"In Arab Parliament, we fight for the rights of the people. We have stood against Israel and now we stand against Iran.

"Iran is not an enemy but it is not a friend either."

Mr Al Jarwan said Iranian people's money was being spent on terrorism and wars rather than development and growth.

"Iran is backing terrorists in the region rather than investing in its own people, whom we love, and want to see living bet-



■ Mr Al Mulla

ter lives," he said.

"Our love is not weakness and the Iranian regime should stop exploiting this to its benefit, neglecting the welfare of its people."

Mr Al Jarwan also said international human rights organisations showed double standards.

"We have done a lot to improve our human rights record. We are in a better position than before but international human rights organisations love to criticise us.



■ Dr Al Rashdi

"Several times we have tried to reach out to them but they seem bent on saying things from their angle rather than the truth."

Bahrain's National Assembly chairman Ahmed Al Mulla, under whose patronage the conference was held, said legislators were concerned with developing human rights in Bahrain with new legislations and legal support to the Interior Ministry.

"There are serious efforts

from the ministry; the new Police Academy is a futuristic approach in how policemen should deal with people," he said.

"There are human rights organisations that listen to one side and base their reports on that, rather than being balanced.

"The world has now realised their falsified reports and we in parliament are planning to hold a national forum where human rights bodies have been invited to come up with recommendations to help us improve the way we do things."

Assistant Foreign Minister Abdulla Al Dossari praised the human rights record of GCC states, which includes comprehensive legislations, executive, judicial and independent institutions that guarantee promotion of political and civil liberties, social and cultural rights on the basis of equality and social justice.

Addressing the forum, the minister said GCC states have made remarkable achievements in human rights in line with Sharia principles, voluntary international obligations and commitments within the UN and its specialised organisations. He said it was a result of their active membership of the Human Rights Council.

Other speakers at the event, which had around 500 participants, were AFHR secretary-general and the event's secretary-general Isa Rashid Al Arabi and Arab League human rights committee chairman Dr Mohammed Al Rashdi.

Ombudsman secretary-general Nawaf Al Ma'awada also gave a presentation of work carried out by his organisation.

An exhibition depicting Houthi attacks on civilians and infrastructure in Yemen was also showcased at the event by local Yemeni activists.

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■ More than 70 projects were presented at the ICT and Web Academy Project Exhibition, hosted by Bahrain Polytechnic, in Isa Town. The aim was to provide the ICT student community of Bahrain and the Gulf with necessary skills to work on real-life problems while following business standards by undertaking academic, technical and management tasks to help them enhance their ICT and business acumen. In a discussion entitled "ICT Dialogue", six panelists from companies in Bahrain shared their views on the skills required to make significant changes to work practices. They also addressed ways of establishing collaboration between industry and academia. At the event are, from left, Wissam Kadi, Reza Memari, Dr Bijan Majidi, Dr Adel Abdulla, Dr Hassan Al Mulla, Ameer Yousif, Abdulla Abdul Rasool, Dr Mohammed Al Aseeri, Shaikh Ali bin Abdulrahman Al Khalifa, Annamarie Lawrence and Dr Philippe Pringuet.